

## **Three concrete developments in 24 hours**

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### **Body**

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There were chocolate bars and hockey jokes, but beyond the goodwill demonstrated Friday between the leaders of Canada and the United States, there were also some concrete developments.

A new approach to managing the Canada-U.S. border.

Of all the developments announced Friday, this is the most immediate: an end, as of midnight last night, to the ability of asylum-seekers to request refugee status at unofficial border crossings between the two countries.

The Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement already required refugee claimants to request asylum in the first country they arrive in and prevented them from crossing the border to the other country to seek asylum there instead. But the agreement only applied at formal border crossings; in recent years, tens of thousands of people had passed between Canada and the U.S. at unofficial crossing points, where the agreement's terms were not in effect.

With President Joe Biden also under domestic pressure to manage irregular migration to the United States - including at the northern border, although it is a much bigger problem for the U.S. in the south - both countries talked about a way to plug the gap.

What they settled on was erasing it, and allowing either country to simply return any asylum-seeker within 14 days of their crossing the border.

The announcement of changes to the STCA came with a promise by Canada to accept 15,000 displaced people from the Western Hemisphere, a region in the throes of a migration crisis. Exactly how they'll fit into Canada's overall immigration plans was not immediately clear.

Flexing military muscle in North America and abroad

Both Biden and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pledged ongoing and firm support for Ukraine in its war with Russia.

But the U.S. has in recent months been pressuring Canada to step up on another security issue: the situation in Haiti, where armed gangs have seized control.

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Trudeau has side-stepped direct requests for Canada to lead a multinational force to return stability to the country, pointing to other measures his government is taking to help the Haitian people.

On Friday, he announced a further \$100 million for equipment and support for the Haitian National Police, as well as more sanctions.

To cool tension over how much Canada spends on its own defence capabilities, particularly after Norad forces shot down a Chinese spy balloon over the Yukon, Trudeau said \$7.3 billion will be spent on infrastructure required to support new F-35 fighter jets Canada committed to buying this year.

"Norad is the only binational military command in the world, yet another way in which our partnership is exceptional," Biden said. "It is an incredible symbol of the faith we have in one another and the trust we place in each other's capabilities."

#### Shared economies - and climate change goals

The ways in which Canada and the U.S. could collaborate - instead of compete - when it comes to green projects and jobs also loomed large Friday.

"We're gonna amplify our shared commitment - climate action - while growing our economies," Biden said during his address to Parliament.

Nevertheless, Biden's ambitious Inflation Reduction Act, which invests billions into energy production and manufacturing in the U.S., has sparked concern in Canada that it would drive investments south of the border if the Ottawa fails to respond appropriately.

The Trudeau government announced it was moving forward with a "new investment tax credit for clean technology manufacturing in addition to tax measures that support clean hydrogen and clean technology adoption."

Also announced was a one-year energy transformation task force, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland and Amos Hochstein, the U.S. special presidential co-ordinator for global infrastructure, that will focus on renewable energy and electric vehicle supply chains, critical minerals and nuclear energy.

Both nations have promised to reach net-zero power grids by 2035, and "will work to harmonize charging standards and develop cross-border alternative fuel corridors ... to build a network of electric vehicle fast chargers and community charging options on both sides of the border."

Canada will also spend \$420 million over the next 10 years to "protect and restore" the Great Lakes, on top of a previous \$1 billion (U.S.) pledge from the U.S. government.

Also, both countries, it was announced will support the development of a North American semiconductor industry. Biden said the U.S. will spend \$50 million to get more companies in both countries to invest in semiconductors, while Canada has promised up to \$250 million for companies in the sector.

"When the chips begin to roll off of these new production lines in America, a lot of them are going to be coming to Canada to be packaged. That is a lot of jobs, good-paying jobs," Biden said.

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